

5

minute safety talk



Pool safety

Recreational swimming is a popular activity for children and adults. Many people do not realize the dangers associated with swimming pools and small wading pools. The threat of drowning exists in a variety of circumstances and can happen in as little as 1 inch of water. A child can lose consciousness within 2 minutes after submersion and suffer irreversible brain damage within 4-6 minutes. In residential pools, the most effective protection against drowning is attentiveness. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends never leaving children alone in or near a pool – even for a moment – and make sure they are supervised at all times by an adult who knows CPR.

Pool drains also present a hidden danger because of the risk of drain or suction entrapment. If a pool has a drain with a broken, missing or faulty cover, it can cause hair, body limbs, clothing or jewelry to become trapped in the drain.

Bringing safety home (tips for safety professionals):

- Encourage employees to practice and enforce pool safety measures at home.
- Provide information about pool chemical safety.

Employee activity ideas:

- Provide CPR and first aid training for all employees. In the event of a drowning situation, a quick first aid response could save a life.
- Educate employees about proper storage and usage of pool chemicals.

Safety tips:

- Place barriers or fencing around pools. All gates leading to pools or bodies of water should be self-closing and self-latching and should open outward. The latch should be out of reach on the pool side of the gate.
- Make sure a responsible adult who knows CPR supervises swimming children at all times.
- Always swim with a buddy.
- Avoid consuming alcohol while swimming or supervising children near water.
- Take swim lessons.
- Learn CPR. If someone is drowning, performing CPR before the paramedics arrive may help save someone's life.
- Install alarms on gates leading to pools, and have rescue and first aid equipment available.
- It only takes a small amount of water to drown a child, so wading pools should be emptied and turned over after each use to prevent them from filling with rainwater.
- Parents need to enforce rules such as no running or horseplay around the pool area.
- Make sure the pool drain is well maintained.
- Do not use any pool cleaning or chlorine devices that look like toys.
- Attend a local CPR class to learn how to respond in the event of a drowning.
- Follow local pool ordinances.

Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov/healthySwimming
- Drowning Prevention Foundation <http://drowningpreventionfoundation.us>
- National Drowning Prevention Alliance www.ndpa.org/home/index.htm